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Gorbachev's Approach to the United Nations: Image Building at US Expense?

A Research Paper

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Gorbachev's Approach to the United Nations: Image Building at US Expense?

A Research Paper

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Office of Global Issues. It was coordinated with the
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GI 89-10085
September 1989

Gorbachev's Approach to
the United Nations:
Image Building vs
US Expense?

Key Judgments

Information available
as of 30 June 1989
was used in this report

Recent Soviet initiatives and changed behavior at the United Nations have earned Moscow an improved international image. Under Gorbachev, Moscow has tabled a variety of new proposals ranging from international arms control regimes to protecting the environment, and Soviet representatives have displayed a less antagonistic and more reasonable approach to UN discussions on these issues than in the past. Despite some short-term propaganda gains, however, we believe the limits of Gorbachev's proposals will become increasingly evident as the Soviets default on some of their promises.

The centerpiece of Gorbachev's UN campaign has been the Comprehensive System of International Peace and Security (CSIS), which encompasses over 70 UN-related proposals on everything from strengthening the role of the Secretary General to multilateral verification regimes. CSIS has been described by the Soviets as a practical manifestation of "new thinking" in their foreign policy, even though the majority of UN member states remain suspicious and regard it as an effort by Moscow to exploit the United Nations

to win acceptance of the broad CSIS concept after suffering setbacks in UN General Assembly votes in 1986 and 1987, Gorbachev altered his approach in 1988 by breaking CSIS into five discrete issue areas that could be pursued independently:

- Arms control proposals that stress multilateral arms control, with the Third World becoming more involved.
- Peacekeeping proposals that stress increasing the use of UN peacekeeping.
- Economic development proposals that stress the use of the United Nations to combat world poverty and Third World debt.
- Environmental proposals that call for conferences on the environment and initiating an environmental code of conduct.
- Human rights and legal proposals that stress the USSR's interest in improving human rights through the United Nations.

Gorbachev's efforts partially paid off because the General Assembly in the fall of 1988 affirmed the CSIS concept but not its implementation. At future UN sessions, we believe Moscow will seek piecemeal implementation of CSIS while taking advantage of propaganda opportunities.

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In our view, Moscow gears its UN strategy primarily toward advancing broader foreign policy goals without necessarily expecting particular proposals to be enacted. [] indicates that the Soviets do not expect their entire CSIS initiative to be implemented because of Western opposition and that they actually oppose any real change in the UN Charter because it could limit Soviet power in the UN system.

[] also indicates that Gorbachev's UN strategy is intended in part to help the USSR exploit the United Nations for espionage purposes. Moscow has a history of using UN Secretariat positions for intelligence operations, and we believe its new interest in UN peacekeeping reflects in part Soviet interest in that area. For example, in February 1989, Moscow secured the appointment of Victor Andreev—a well-known KGB operative and a member of the UN Secretariat—to head the UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia, although he was later refused entry into Namibia by South African authorities. (

Moscow, nevertheless, has skillfully used its UN proposals to build itself a better image, increase its prestige worldwide, and encourage criticism of the United States. We believe Gorbachev's UN strategy will at least complicate US policy in several areas such as arms control, Third World debt, and resolving regional conflicts over the short term as it challenges Washington to respond.

Despite some short-term propaganda gains, however, we believe the limits of Gorbachev's proposals will become increasingly evident. Many nations continue to view Gorbachev's UN initiatives with suspicion, limiting Moscow's ability to improve its voting support in the General Assembly. Complaints by many Third World states about Moscow's refusal to put forward an economic aid program, for example, have continued under Gorbachev, and the complaints are likely to increase if the Soviets continue to scale back aid programs to non-Communist LDCs. Although Moscow may be able to improve its image on regional issues by proposing new peacekeeping forces in areas of the world where it has influence—such as Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Central America—financial, political, and logistic restraints will probably prevent the extension of UN forces into these areas for the foreseeable future. For that reason, we believe

Moscow's ability to exploit regional issues will be limited to existing or planned operations in Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Angola and will be offset in the long term by the lack of progress on Gorbachev's other proposals—such as reducing Third World debt or initiating a comprehensive nuclear test ban.

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L Gorbachev's support of the United Nations included his historic address to the UN General Assembly on 7 December 1988. This was the first such visit by a Soviet leader since Nikita Khrushchev's visit in 1960. J

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Gorbachev's Approach to the United Nations: Image Building at US Expense?

Introduction

Over the past four years, the Soviets have tabled several new proposals at the United Nations, ranging from international arms control regimes to protecting the environment.¹ At the same time, Moscow has substantially improved its image at the United Nations through appearances by Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze at the opening sessions of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and by Soviet President Gorbachev's landmark speech in December 1988. Recent Soviet proposals that seemed remote possibilities only a few years ago, such as calling for a UN role in Afghanistan and Cambodia, have earned Gorbachev new support for many of his UN initiatives from around the world. Furthermore, in a radical departure from past behavior, the Soviets have promised to pay their UN arrearages and have repeatedly reiterated their allegiance to the UN Charter.

Objectives of Gorbachev's UN Strategy

According to [] [] primary goals of the Soviet UN strategy are to change the debate on international issues that have provided the West with ammunition to chastise Moscow and the East Bloc and to put the United States on the defensive. For example, Moscow won some good publicity at the expense of the United States at the 43rd UN General Assembly in the fall of 1988 when it pushed for the creation of a UN agency to perform on-site verification for all bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements. Moscow portrayed the refusal of Washington to accept the proposal as evidence that the United States was not serious about arms control.

¹ See appendix A for a chronological listing of Gorbachev's UN initiatives.

[] also indicates that another objective of Gorbachev's UN strategy is to continue building an image of cooperation and reasonableness for the Soviet Union, an effort that Gorbachev hopes will pay off in heightened prestige, improved diplomatic flexibility, and increased Third World and West European support. According to []

[] Soviet academic writings, the Soviets view the United Nations as a useful venue for portraying the USSR as a "responsible" power interested in, among other things, nuclear disarmament, "peaceful competition" between East and West, and a "just" international economic order. By supporting themes that are popular with the Third World and with peace groups in the West, Moscow hopes to win new support in the General Assembly. In promoting their image-building effort, the Soviets have also stressed that theirs is the majority view in the United Nations and that the United States is isolated; Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovskiy has repeatedly contrasted in press conferences and UN speeches the differences between Moscow's new, enlightened approach to the United Nations and the allegedly hostile, uncooperative approach of the United States.

Finally, [] [] indicated that an additional objective of Gorbachev's UN strategy is to enhance Soviet espionage opportunities. []

[] that Soviet espionage activity at the United Nations has continued unabated under Gorbachev. If enacted, many of his proposals would create large, new UN bureaucracies that the USSR could staff with KGB or GRU officers. There are also signs that Moscow plans to exploit UN peacekeeping by placing intelligence officers in key support positions with UN peacekeeping forces around the world.

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Moscow's Recent UN Proposals

The centerpiece of Gorbachev's UN campaign has been the Comprehensive System of International Peace and Security (CSIS). This initiative—made up of over 70 proposals ranging from strengthening the role of the Secretary General to protecting the environment—has been described by the Soviets as a practical manifestation of "new thinking" in their foreign policy. CSIS was first unveiled by Gorbachev in a speech to the 27th Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Congress meeting in early 1986. Far from being a new initiative, however, CSIS consists of political, economic, and disarmament proposals previously submitted by Moscow, the Third World, and others.

Despite widespread misgivings by many UN member states, Moscow's CSIS initiative passed last year after the Soviet delegation asked for only affirmation of the CSIS concept, not its implementation. The delegation also referred to the initiative as the "Comprehensive International Security" proposal to allay criticism that Moscow was promoting an entirely new UN system it could better manipulate. Although the initiative received 97 affirmative votes of 159 cast, we believe many UN diplomats probably voted for the proposal out of respect for Gorbachev, who spoke to the United Nations on the day of the vote []

[] several states also told the Soviets that they would vote for Moscow's 1988 CSIS proposal only on condition that Moscow not table it again. Cameroon and Niger refused to vote for the plan because they believed it was part of a secret Soviet agenda to exploit the United Nations, according to [] Even Zimbabwe, which usually votes for Soviet-approved positions in the United Nations, was reluctant to back Moscow and told [] that it was not convinced of the need for Moscow's CSIS initiative, according to []

According to [] Gorbachev altered his approach to win acceptance of CSIS in early 1988 by breaking the initiative into five discrete issues

Soviet Officials on the Creation of a New International Security System

There must be new thinking on international relations, leading to a reasonable, responsible, and rational organization of international affairs.

—Gorbachev in Pravda
September 1987

Demilitarized zones should be created in all areas of regional conflict as preludes to permanent nuclear-weapons-free zones or zones of peace

—Gorbachev in Pravda
September 1987

The elimination and prevention of regional conflicts can be the result of a credible system of comprehensive security based on the UN Charter.

—Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovskiy
at a New York Press Conference
October 1988.

The Soviet Union is willing to transfer sovereignty in disarmament decisionmaking to the United Nations, which would have legislative power to outlaw war.

—Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovskiy
at a Press Conference in Kyoto,
Japan
21 April 1989

areas—arms control and disarmament, UN peace-keeping and regional issues, economics, the environment, and human rights—that could be pursued independently to overcome the resistance experienced in 1986 and 1987. After Gorbachev altered his approach in early 1988, Soviet representatives downplayed the overall CSIS concept in favor of discrete

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The Comprehensive System of International Peace and Security: Old Ideas, New Emphasis

Gorbachev's Comprehensive System of International Peace and Security (CSIS) initiative incorporates many proposals that have been pursued by Gorbachev and his predecessors in one form or another for many years. Most of the more than 70 individual proposals that make up CSIS are intended to gain support for long-held Soviet interests, primarily in the area of disarmament, such as the removal of foreign military bases, dismantling of military blocs, restrictions on naval activities, and undermining Western support for deterrence. Rather than focus on only these important Soviet objectives, Gorbachev's strategy in promoting CSIS appears to be to emphasize the more attractive and plausible aspects of the initiative.

Of the more than 70 proposals that the USSR has put forward at the United Nations in the last few years, the majority center on arms control issues. Moscow has given particular attention to:

- Creating a UN verification mechanism. This proposal would create a UN agency responsible for verifying all bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements. Moscow has worked closely with the neutral and nonaligned nations—most of which desire to play a greater role in arms control—to garner support. The NATO countries were united in opposition at the last UNGA because of the likelihood that it would complicate delicate negotiations by introducing Third World states with no stake in such negotiations and thus possibly prevent some agreements from ever taking place.
 - Creating a world space organization. Moscow wants an organization under the aegis of the United Nations, as proposed by the Soviets in 1982, to assure the peaceful uses of outer space and to allow Third World countries the ability to engage in space exploration. While Gorbachev probably is sincere in his push for a world space organization, he has used it primarily to win greater Third World support and to encourage criticism of the Strategic Defense Initiative.
 - Implementing a chemical weapons ban. Gorbachev has skillfully used the United Nations to put forward proposals calling for the elimination of chemical weapons, allowing him to seize the high ground on an issue of great interest in Western Europe—particularly West Germany—while permitting the USSR to deflect criticisms from itself. Moscow's proposals have made the USSR look flexible, forthcoming, and eager for a chemical weapons treaty while the West, particularly the United States, has been put on the defensive.
 - Implementing a comprehensive nuclear test ban. Gorbachev has skillfully used the issue of a comprehensive nuclear test ban to improve the image of the USSR and to isolate the United States. According to [redacted] despite Gorbachev's demand that the United States agree to a comprehensive nuclear test ban, he does not really expect the United States to concur. According to [redacted] Gorbachev put forward his test ban initiative to show the world that genuine change was taking place in the USSR and to score a propaganda coup with the Third World and Western peace groups.
 - Creating "zones of peace" and "nuclear free zones." Moscow has tried to link all ongoing arms control talks—particularly those with the United States—to the creation of zones of peace and nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world.
-

To reach an atmosphere conducive to winning support for these proposals both in the West and the Third World, Gorbachev lumped into CSIS many initiatives that Moscow heretofore had refused to consider in UN debate or had reacted to with a sharp, anti-US bias. These include:

- *Increased use of UN peacekeeping.*
- *Removing worldwide protectionist barriers.*
- *A protocol against piracy of nuclear materials by terrorists.*
- *Creation of international legal criteria for the reuniting of families.*
- *Charging the WHO with combating AIDS, alcoholism, and drugs.*
- *Universal compliance with the UNESCO cultural property accord.*
- *The creation of a UN environmental protection plan.*
- *The enactment of a protocol requiring all states to report environmental conservation activities and ecological accidents to the United Nations.*
- *The creation of a new international economic order.*
- *Increased loans by the West to Third World nations at little or no interest as well as the suspension of interest payments on existing loans held by developing countries.*
- *Setting up a hotline between permanent members of the Security Council, the Secretary General, and the chairman of the Nonaligned Movement.*
- *The creation of a new world information and communications order to include censorship of international journalists*

issues that would present propaganda opportunities and move the UN toward a piecemeal adoption of the major CSIS proposals.

Arms Control and Disarmament

Gorbachev's UN arms control and disarmament proposals embodied in his "new international security system" represent a sharp break from past Soviet policy of refusing to discuss most arms control issues—particularly substantive, East-West ones—in a multilateral forum. These proposals form the backbone of his approach to the United Nations and touch on virtually every aspect of disarmament, holding particular appeal to Third World and Western audiences and generating considerable positive press in the Western media

According to [] Gorbachev's arms control proposals are part of a wider campaign to fracture the NATO alliance and encourage enmity between the United States and the Third World. One focus of this campaign has been the US foreign military presence. Moscow has tried to win points with the Third World by linking all ongoing arms control talks—particularly those with the United States—to "zones of peace" and "nuclear-free zones," proposals already popular with the Third World. If implemented as devised by the Soviets, these proposals would eliminate US foreign basing and impede the free movement of the US Navy

Another aim of Gorbachev's strategy appears to be to gain leverage over the United States on bilateral negotiations by forcing Washington to block Soviet proposals. Soviet public statements suggest that Moscow believes that the United Nations can make a significant contribution to its disarmament agenda by playing a limited and well-defined role as a contributor to bilateral efforts that have reached an impasse, primarily by bringing additional pressure to bear on the United States

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Despite going to considerable lengths to promote its arms control agenda, Moscow probably does not want to see it implemented in toto and is putting forward some proposals on the assumption that the United States will block them, thus giving Moscow a propaganda advantage. For example, [] diplomats believe Moscow does not really support the idea of a UN verification mechanism because of the likelihood that its provisions allowing Third World states to participate would complicate important bilateral arms control negotiations with the United States []

[] reportedly supported this view when he told a [] [] 1988 that the USSR will not permit a UN verification agency to verify the INF Treaty and that he doubted that such a mechanism would ever be created because of US opposition.

UN Peacekeeping and Regional Issues

Recent Soviet peacekeeping proposals represent a major policy shift for the USSR. Ever since Khrushchev's angry assault in 1960 on UN peacekeeping efforts in the Belgian Congo, Moscow has refused to cooperate with new UN field operations or to pay dues for them. Beginning in the spring of 1987, however, the USSR reversed course when it:

- Paid current annual dues for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and other existing peacekeeping missions and announced its intention to pay \$175 million in arrearages.
- Sent Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovskiy to New York during the last two General Assembly sessions to promote a new image of Soviet interest in UN peacekeeping.
- Made proposals to strengthen the logistic capacity of the peacekeeping organizations—even suggesting Soviet airlift assistance and the use of Soviet military reserve units—for missions in regional conflict areas

Although recent Soviet peacekeeping initiatives appear to be shaped by Gorbachev's stated interest in improving international security and his ability to

Soviet Officials on UN Peacekeeping

The Soviet Union would be prepared to assign its own military contingents for peacekeeping operations if the parties concerned show an interest and express their consent. The Soviet Union would not object to corresponding participation by the USA and other great powers.

—Soviet Press Spokesman Ovinnikov
at a New York Press Conference
October 1988

The Soviet Union now has a fresh view on participating in peacekeeping operations and is prepared to consider providing for peacekeeping operations a military contingent of our armed forces and to train appropriate military personnel for this purpose.

—Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovskiy
in a speech to the United Nations
October 1988

The need to adapt UN operations to new activities was demonstrated by the Persian Gulf situation. As a new step for the United Nations, it is time to start breaking new ground by beginning the elaboration of a legal base for and possible objectives of UN naval operations, including a trial run of such activities.

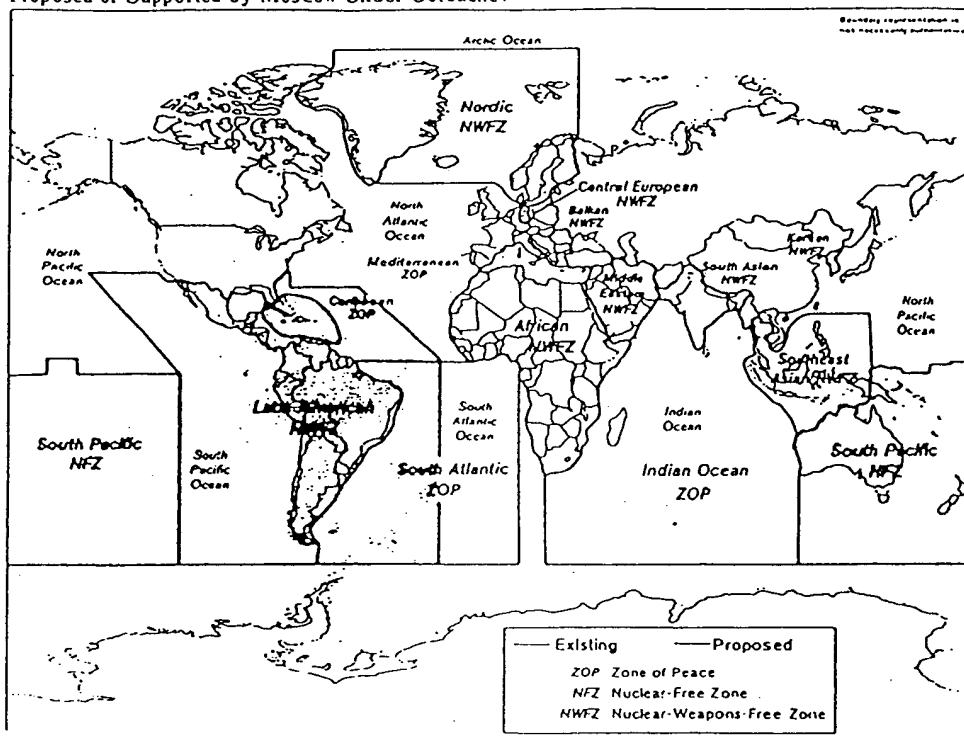
—Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovskiy
in a speech to the United Nations
October 1988

deal with regional conflicts, these proposals also help maintain Soviet influence and presence. For example, Moscow has attempted—to date, successfully—to use the United Nations in Afghanistan to influence events in that country and to encourage international criticism for the policies of Pakistan and the United States [] [] this strategy

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**Zones of Peace and Nuclear-Free Zones
Proposed or Supported by Moscow Under Gorbachev**



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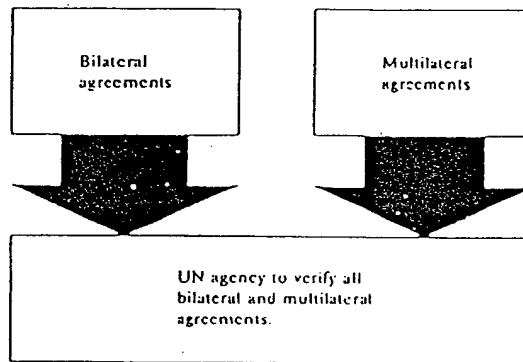
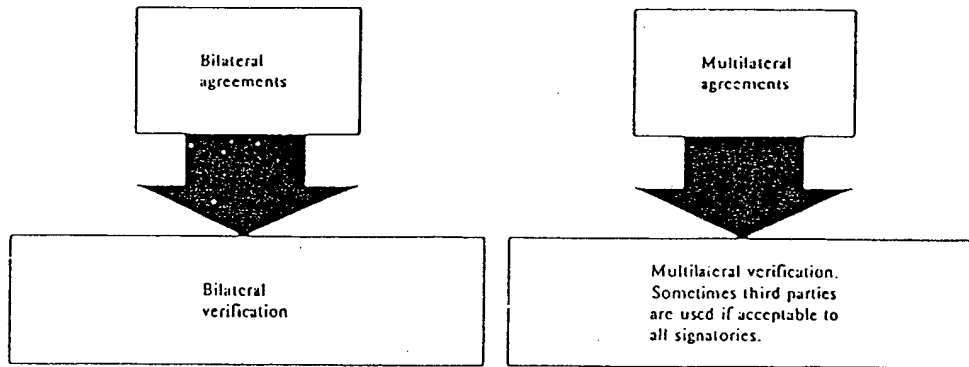
is paying off because pressure appears to be building to pass a resolution calling for a broad-based Afghan government, one that would include the Najibullah regime, and a cutoff of all foreign military aid. Moreover, aside from offering to participate in other UN peacekeeping operations, Moscow has argued that UN peacekeeping forces should be used in Angola, Cambodia, and Nicaragua—probably as much to encourage international pressure against the United States, which supports insurgencies in these states, as to lower the costs of Soviet commitments in these regions.

We believe another major goal of Gorbachev's promotion of UN peacekeeping is to counter US global presence and influence. Gorbachev has pursued this goal by putting forward initiatives that would replace US presence with that of the United Nations. These initiatives call for:

- *New uses of peacekeeping forces.* In a September 1987 article in *Pravda*, Gorbachev proposed using UN peacekeeping forces to close "foreign military

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How Gorbachev's UN Proposals Would Affect Arms Control Negotiation and Decisionmaking



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bases" worldwide and withdraw all foreign troops to "native soil," with UN peacekeeping forces performing roles such as that played by the US Navy in the Persian Gulf during the Iran-Iraq war. According to [] proposals of this type were aimed at dividing NATO and strengthening Soviet ties to the Third World at the expense of the United States.

- *The alteration of peacekeeping decisionmaking.* Gorbachev has put forward an elaborate plan that would give the UN Security Council direction of the day-to-day operations of UN peacekeeping forces. The plan involves the activation of the moribund UN Military Staff Committee, which would advise the Secretary General and the Security Council on peacekeeping matters. Routine peacekeeping decisions now made by the Secretary General would instead be made by the Security Council with the advice of the Military Staff Committee. This plan would undercut the Secretary General and allow Moscow to use its Security Council veto to block peacekeeping decisions with which it disagreed.

Economics

Soviet UN economic proposals appear designed to blame the West for Third World economic problems while improving the Soviet image. These proposals concern:

- *The relationship between disarmament and development.* Moscow has argued that a primary cause of Third World underdevelopment is the large amount of money spent on weapons by the developed countries that could be used to fund development projects in the LDCs. In 1986 the Soviets proposed that a fund be set up into which savings incurred from disarmament would be deposited. The fund would be used by the United Nations for Third World development projects. Although many Western states reject the idea of a relationship between disarmament and development, few are willing to say so publicly. At the United Nations, the United States has stood alone in publicly opposing this initiative.

Gorbachev on Economic Development

The following are remarks made by General Secretary Gorbachev in his speech to the UN General Assembly on 7 December 1988 dealing with Third World development:

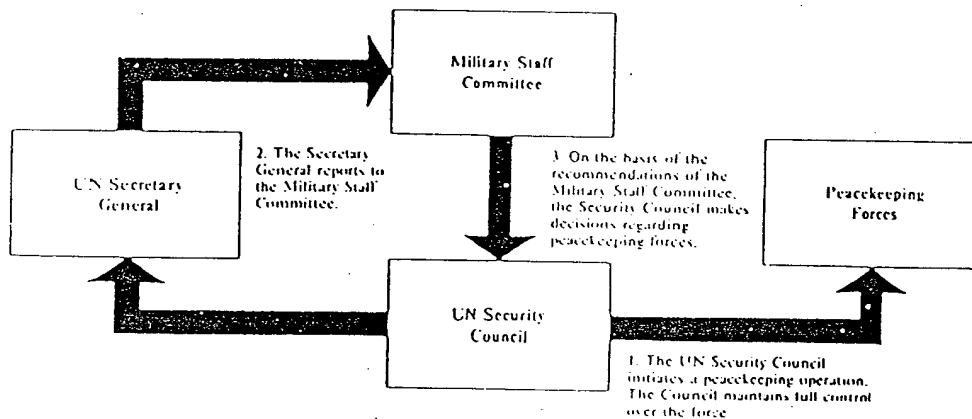
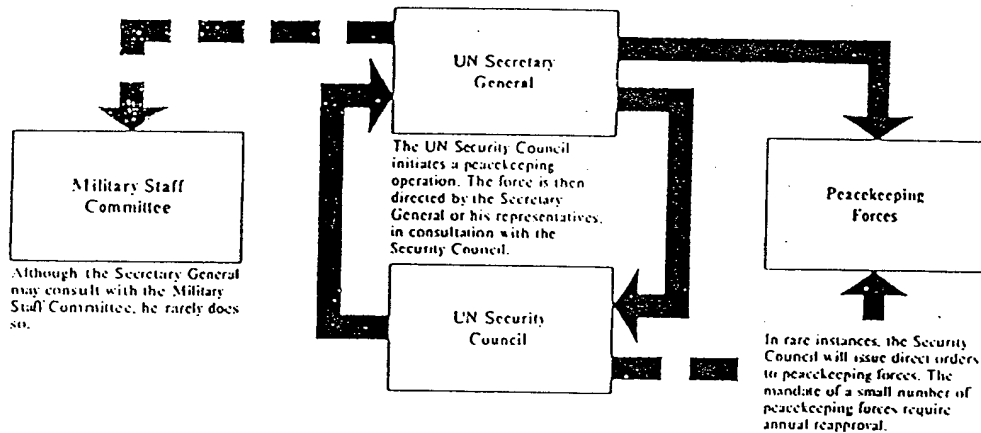
... Foreign debt (Third World) is one of the most acute problems. Let us not forget that during the colonial era the developing world advanced the prosperity of a considerable part of the world community at the price of incalculable losses and sacrifices. The time has come to compensate for the deprivations that accompanied this historic and tragic contribution to the world's material progress. We are convinced that the solution again lies in internationalizing the approach. Taking a realistic look at things, one must acknowledge that the accumulated debt cannot be paid, that it cannot be recovered on the original terms. The Soviet Union is prepared to establish a long-term moratorium, up to 100 years, on the payment of debts by the least developed countries, and, in a whole series of cases, to write off the debts completely. As far as other developing countries are concerned, we invite you to consider the following:

- To limit payments on their official debts in accordance with the indices of economic development for each of them, or to declare the long-term deferral of a large part of the payments.
- To support the appeal of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to reduce indebtedness to commercial banks.
- To provide governmental support for market mechanisms for settling Third World debts, including the creation of a specialized international institution for buying up debts at a discount.

The Soviet Union advocates specific discussion of ways of settling the debt crisis at multilateral forums, including consultations of heads of government of debtor and creditor nations held under the aegis of the UN.

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Figure 3
How Gorbachev's UN Proposals Would Change UN Peacekeeping Decisionmaking



- *Debt relief.* Gorbachev's most dramatic action on this issue was his announcement at the UN General Assembly that the USSR would implement a moratorium of up to 100 years on some Third World debt owed to the USSR and his suggestion that the West do likewise. He has also called for an international conference under UN auspices to negotiate Third World debt. We believe these proposals are largely propaganda designed to appeal to the Third World because the USSR is owed relatively little by the Third World. Moreover, the debts Gorbachev has offered to defer are essentially uncollectable debts run up by Communist LDCs such as Cuba, Mongolia, and Vietnam and Marxist client states such as Angola, Ethiopia, and Nicaragua.

- *Joining the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).* Although the Soviet Union has applied for membership in these organizations, we doubt that Moscow is willing to agree to the stringent economic reforms. Nonetheless, Soviet UN representatives claim that the West has conspired to keep the Soviet Union isolated from the international marketplace, and a large number of Third World nations agree, according to []

Environment

Environmental proposals reflect a new Soviet effort to play a leading role on an issue of growing importance. Unlike other Soviet UN proposals, these proposals have no downside because Moscow has been accused of few environmental offenses outside the Soviet Union. We believe that these proposals have two principal focuses:

- *The Third World.* Moscow has attempted to use environmental issues to fuel enmity between the West and the Third World. For example, at the 1988 UNGA, the Soviets tried to exploit the issue of alleged "hostile" dumping of hazardous waste—defined by the United Nations as anonymous dumping without the state's knowledge—in Africa by

Soviet Officials on the Environment

The fragile and densely populated areas of the world are being turned into toxic waste dumps.

—*Foreign Minister Shevardnadze in a speech to the United Nations
September 1988*

The priority for developing environmental security is now second only to eliminating the global nuclear threat.

—*Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovskiy in a speech to the United Nations
October 1988*

The Soviet Union believes that the renunciation of certain military programs, whether planned or ongoing, could be made use of to channel the released resources to establish a regime of environmental security.

—*Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovskiy in a speech to the United Nations
October 1988*

reworking its CSIS environmental proposals to specify a system of rules and conduct in environmental matters. Included in these rules were restrictions on dumping by multinational corporations at sea and in the Third World. Western nations rejected proposals on this subject because there is no evidence that the West has engaged in "hostile" dumping.

- *Western Europe.* Because the environment is an important topic in Western Europe, Gorbachev has put forward a number of proposals for international

agreements to protect the European environment. The Soviet proposals call for the standardization of national laws concerning the environment, the convening of a European environmental meeting between the Warsaw Pact and EC nations in 1990, and the convening of a World Environmental Convention in 1992. Although these proposals are not inimical to Western interests, many Western states have questioned the need for them as they duplicate the ongoing work of the UN Environmental Program in Nairobi.

Human Rights and Legal Proposals

In our view, Gorbachev's human rights and legal proposals represent a Soviet effort to seize the high ground on these issues. For years the Soviets have been pilloried in the United Nations for their human rights abuses, and Gorbachev is probably trying to reduce the number of issues that can be used against the Soviet Bloc in UN debate. The human rights-related issues that have plagued the Soviets for years at the United Nations include:

- *Afghanistan.* Moscow almost completely removed the issue of its occupation of Afghanistan and its violation of human rights there by withdrawing its troops earlier this year. Moscow has given the United Nations credit for the settlement in Afghanistan and has supported the use of UNGOMAP—the UN peacekeeping force for Afghanistan. Moreover, in 1987 the USSR and Afghanistan began to cooperate with the UN Human Rights Commission and allowed a special UN representative to come to Afghanistan to investigate the human rights situation.
- *Cuban human rights.* Gorbachev's approach to human rights issues has also involved his working within the United Nations to frustrate US efforts to obtain a UN condemnation of Cuban human rights abuses. Because Cuba is not on the UN Human Rights Commission, the Soviet delegation has represented its interests over the past three years, even sponsoring a resolution condemning human rights violations in the United States as a counter to a US resolution condemning Cuba. After a 1989 commission report that was only mildly critical of Cuba, the Soviet Bloc convinced the United Nations to drop this topic and leave additional monitoring to the UN Secretary General.

Soviet Officials on Human Rights and International Law

The world cannot be considered secure if human rights are violated in it. I will only add: If a large part of this world has no elementary conditions for a life worthy of man, if millions of people have the full "right" to go hungry, to have no roof over their heads and to be jobless and sick indefinitely when treatment is something they cannot afford . . . the basic human right, the right to life, is disregarded.

—Gorbachev in Pravda
17 September 1987

The mandatory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice should be recognized by all on mutually agreed upon conditions. The permanent members of the Security Council, taking into account special responsibility, are to make the first step in that direction.

—Gorbachev in Pravda
17 September 1987

The five permanent members of the Security Council could set a good example to the entire world community by recognizing on joint agreement the compulsory jurisdiction of the international court . . . In the course of the recent contacts on this issue with the American side, US representatives flatly refused to refer to the International Court issues concerning "national security."

—Petrovskiy, TASS in English
14 October 1988

The Soviets often attempt to shift the debate in the United Nations to alleged failings of the West. Some of these include:

- *The West and human rights issues.* Soviet representatives have attempted to focus discussions on the right to shelter and employment, which they allege

the Soviet Union protects and the West routinely violates. Moscow has also tried to link human rights discussions to other issues. In 1987, Gorbachev stated in *Pravda* that "it is unacceptable to discuss human rights while intending to hang in outer space overhead 'chandeliers' of exotic weapons." Soviet UN representatives have also argued during human rights discussions that Third World states have an inherent "right to development" that is being denied them by the West.

- *Western problems with the International Court of Justice (ICJ).* Gorbachev has put forward a number of proposals to isolate the United States by portraying the USSR as willing to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the court if the United States would agree. For example, in a 27 September 1988 press conference, Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovskiy stated that the Soviet Union would agree to make the rulings and opinions of the International Court of Justice mandatory "if the other members of the Security Council give their agreement." Because of the refusal of the vast majority of states to agree to accept ICJ rulings without preconditions, we believe that this proposal was put forward with the full knowledge that it would not be adopted. Moreover, Gorbachev has almost assured that his proposal will not be adopted by hinging it on the acceptance of the permanent members of the Security Council—who are among the least likely of all states to accept this doctrine—rather than on the acceptance of the majority of UN members.

Assessing the Results

Moscow has skillfully used its UN proposals to build itself a better image, increase its prestige worldwide, and encourage criticism of the United States. Gorbachev's proposals at the General Assembly in December 1988 are a case in point:

- The UN Secretary General praised Gorbachev, saying that "Mikhail Gorbachev's UN speech was an outstanding political document of our times. The success of the Soviet leader's visit to New

York is also a success of the United Nations, which, following such efficient support from the Soviet Union, will undoubtedly be able to do more to promote an end to regional conflicts and solutions to mankind's other problems."

- *The Washington Post* stated in an editorial that Moscow seemed "measurably more ready than Washington to reach out for Third World backing of specific projects in arms control, environmentalism and diminishing regional tensions and hostilities. . . . At the UN anyway, the next American administration is going to find it has to hustle"; and the West German magazine *Der Spiegel* named Gorbachev "man of the year" after his UN appearance and described the Soviet leader's UN speech as "the most remarkable thing he has done so far."
- Egyptian President Mubarak described Gorbachev's speech as "very constructive" and stated that the United States should respond "positively to Gorbachev's UN proposals." The Indian press also lauded Gorbachev's UN speech and stated that he is "the one leader who is prepared to come out with such bold initiatives." The Chinese press reported that the USSR had taken an "offensive position while the United States has taken a defensive one."

Despite gains on several issues, however, we believe Moscow's success in garnering votes in the UNGA for its proposals will probably improve only slightly during the next session. UN voting records indicate that, on issues where the USSR has voiced strong opposition or support, the United Nations has achieved mixed results despite Gorbachev's image-building efforts. For example, a vigorous Soviet effort during the summer of 1988 to have the annual UNGA resolution condemning the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia withdrawn was followed by the UNGA's passing the resolution with a record 122 nations voting in favor. Similarly, although Moscow fared better last year on the only independent initiative it promoted vigorously—CSIS—the vote of 97 in favor still was below the 102 assenting votes received in 1986.

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Challenges and Opportunities

Gorbachev's UN strategy will at least complicate US policy in several areas over the short term as it challenges Washington to respond to Soviet UN proposals.¹ In our view, Moscow gears its UN strategy primarily toward advancing broader foreign policy goals, such as increasing its extensive UN espionage operation, reducing US diplomatic flexibility, and encouraging Third World states to pressure the United States to reduce its regional presence. In fact, [] indicates that they believe the majority of Gorbachev's UN proposals could not be easily implemented and are actually predicated on the assumption that the United States will block them, giving the Soviets additional ammunition for their propaganda campaign. []

[] tends to support this view as several reports indicate that:

- Real change would alter the UN Charter, something the Soviets fear could limit their power and prerogatives in the UN system.
- Implementation of Gorbachev's CSIS initiative is virtually impossible because of Western opposition, and the best that Soviet personnel at the UN Mission in New York expect to get are resolutions extolling its virtues.

Promoting Soviet espionage interests appears to be a major focus of Gorbachev's UN strategy. Many of Gorbachev's proposals, if enacted, will present Moscow with new opportunities to place intelligence officers under UN cover and to use the UN system covertly to support intelligence operations. Moscow has already attempted to exploit UN peacekeeping for espionage purposes. For example, in February 1989, Moscow secured the appointment of Victor Andreiev—a UN Secretariat member known to be a member of the KGB—to head the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) assigned to Namibia. Although Andreiev was refused entry into Namibia by South

¹ See appendix B for a comparison of the advantages and vulnerabilities for the USSR of Gorbachev's UN proposals.

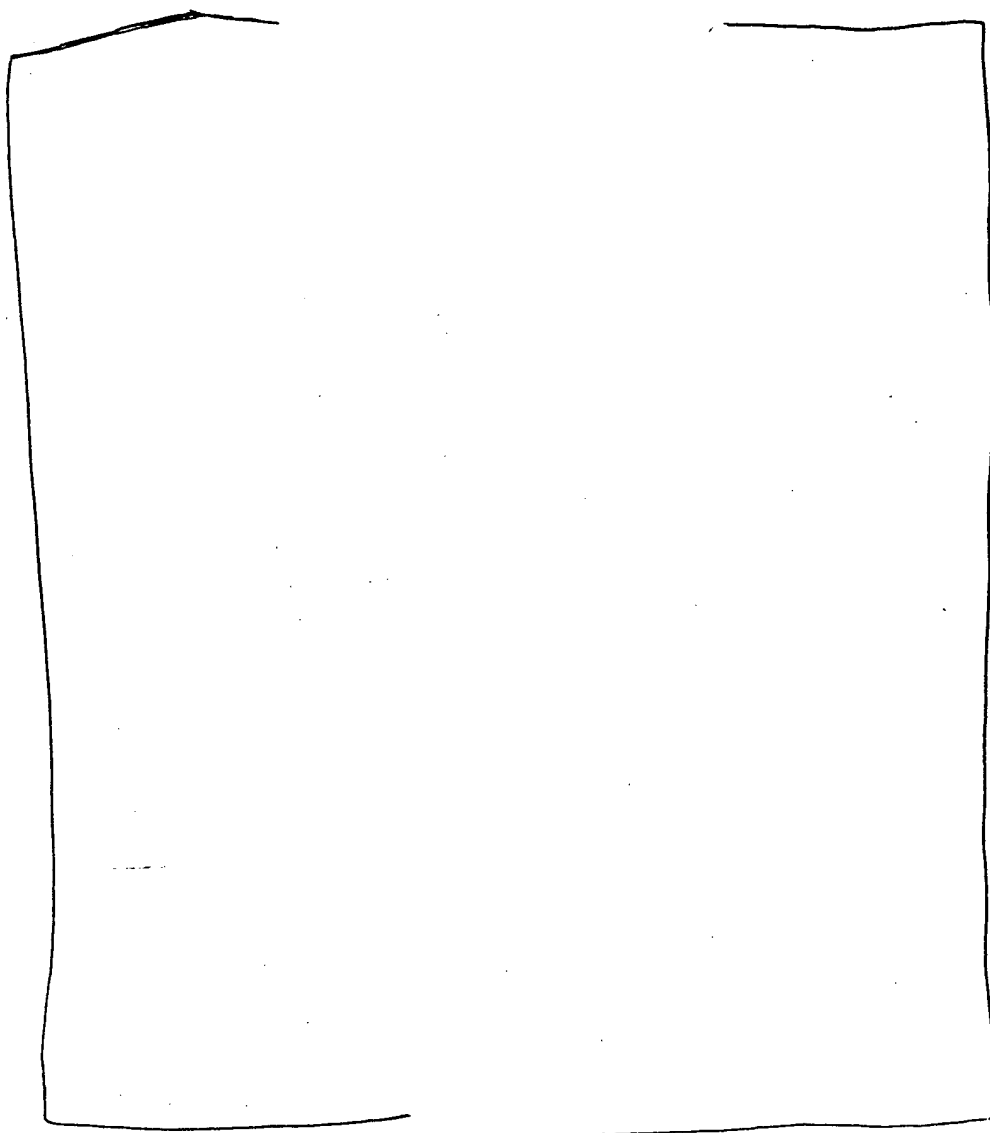
African authorities because of his intelligence connections, several of the other 12 Soviet Bloc personnel who hold high-ranking positions in the UNTAG Secretariat are thought to be KGB officers or suspected intelligence officers.

Although Moscow will continue to create momentum for proposals designed to increase its influence, we believe that most Soviet gains in the United Nations are temporary and that the limits of Gorbachev's UN campaign present opportunities that the United States and the West can exploit. For example, a public campaign by the West that highlights Moscow's failure to deliver concrete initiatives on a number of proposals on arms control, international economic reform, and UN peacekeeping would continue to limit support for the Soviet Union in the General Assembly:

- On arms control, the success of Moscow's UN strategy will be judged by its ability to initiate new arms control agreements. Soviet initiatives promoting chemical weapons and nuclear test ban treaties are likely to stall, however, as long as Moscow fails to address Western reservations about the proliferation of these weapons or how to verify them effectively.
- Economic and development proposals will continue to haunt the Soviets. Complaints from Third World countries about Moscow's refusal to put forward an economic aid program have been substantial and are likely to continue because the Soviets are probably not prepared to bear the cost of a serious aid program of their own. According to [] after Gorbachev's speech to the General Assembly in December 1988, several African states were disturbed that it lacked references to Third World development. []

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Figure 4



- The long-term returns of Gorbachev's regional peacekeeping initiatives at the United Nations are probably limited. Gorbachev could accrue additional short-term gains in influence by proposing UN peacekeeping forces in regional trouble spots—such as Cambodia, Central America, Ethiopia, and Mozambique—where the Soviet Union has influence. In our view, however, political, financial, and logistic problems probably preclude the extension of UN peacekeeping troops to any of these areas, except perhaps Cambodia. According to a [] [] UN peacekeeping resources are already severely overextended, and, as existing commitments are likely to require several years to fulfill, new UN peacekeeping efforts will be extremely difficult to initiate. As a result, we believe Moscow's ability to benefit from the positive publicity that usually results from the commissioning of new UN peacekeeping forces will decrease over time. Furthermore, Soviet efforts to alter the UN peacekeeping decisionmaking system will probably be thwarted because most Western nations support the current system and believe that Moscow's changes would needlessly interfere with a mechanism that has proved effective. To the extent that Moscow's apparent intent to exploit UN peacekeeping for espionage becomes widely known, this aspect of Gorbachev's campaign will also be further undercut.

In our view, Gorbachev's sincerity would be indicated by his willingness to change his UN proposals to reflect more concrete actions. For example:

- On arms control, Gorbachev could steer his campaign for a chemical weapons ban and a nuclear test ban away from criticism of the United States and toward Western concerns on how to verify these agreements.
- On economics, Gorbachev could put forward a comprehensive program of economic aid for Third World states.
- On UN peacekeeping, Gorbachev could adopt a less radical plan for altering UN peacekeeping decision-making and pay the remaining \$150 million Moscow owes the United Nations in back dues.
- On legal issues, Gorbachev could unilaterally agree to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice.

We see no evidence to date, however, to suggest that Gorbachev intends to alter his approach, and we believe that he will stay the course as long as his strategy continues to score propaganda victories and the lack of substance in many of his proposals does not become a liability.

Appendix A

Chronology of Gorbachev's UN Campaign

1985 September (40th UNGA)	Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze pushes for a world space organization and the elimination of space weapons and chemical weapons in his opening speech to the United Nations.
1986 January	Gorbachev first calls for a Comprehensive System of International Peace and Security (CSIS) in his speech to the CPSU Party Congress.
May	Soviets offer \$10 million to help alleviate UN financial crisis; also agree to support UN Interim Force in Lebanon mandate and to pay their UNIFIL assessment.
August	Soviets put forward UN financial reform proposal that calls for the passage of UN budgetary matters by consensus and the creation of a new UN budgeting mechanism.
September (41st UNGA)	Soviet CSIS resolution passed, but with large number of abstentions. Soviet rhetoric on CSIS notably more conciliatory.
1987 February/March	Major change in Soviet approach at UN Human Rights Commission; Soviets agree to discuss Afghanistan and to send a UN observer to assess human rights situation.
Summer	Soviets launch unusually aggressive pre-General-Assembly lobbying campaign with particular emphasis on CSIS and Afghanistan. Rumors also circulated that Gorbachev planned to attend the 42nd UNGA.
July	Soviets agree to join the UN Conference on Trade and Development common fund.
September (42nd UNGA)	Gorbachev publishes "The Reality and Guarantees of a Secure World" in <i>Pravda</i> —an article that spells out his CSIS proposal. In dramatic departure from past practice, Soviets announce they will pay their UN assessment in full.
December	Soviet CSIS resolution passes, but with an unusually low number of votes in favor—76 out of 159.
1988 February/March	Soviets and Cubans are able to get UN Human Rights Commission to drop resolution condemning Cuban human rights abuses in exchange for a UN investigation and report.
June	Soviets play a low-key role at the Third UN Special Session on Disarmament in New York, but encourage a split between the United States and the Third World.

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September
(43rd UNGA)

Soviets unveil a greatly scaled back version of their CSIS resolution. This version is less than half the length of the 1987 resolution and has little substance. Attached to this resolution, however, is an aide memoire reaffirming Moscow's support for its previous CSIS proposal.

December

Gorbachev addresses the General Assembly. In his speech he reiterates his CSIS initiatives and lays out a plan for conventional disarmament in Western Europe. On the same day, the General Assembly passes Moscow's 1988 CSIS resolution with 97 out of 159 nations voting in favor.

1989
February/March

Cuban and Soviet representatives manage to prevent the UN Human Rights Commission from passing a resolution condemning Cuban human rights practices.

Appendix B

Gorbachev's UN Proposals: Comparative Advantages and Vulnerabilities for the USSR

	Advantages to USSR	Vulnerabilities for USSR
Arms control	Helps promote Moscow as interested in disarmament. Puts the United States and West on defensive by pushing proposals that are popular with the Third World.	Few of its proposals are practical as most ignore Western reservations or are obvious attempts to isolate the West.
Peacekeeping/ regional	Helps Moscow extricate itself from regional conflicts. Useful tool to encourage Third World criticism of US foreign military presence. Useful for espionage purposes.	Soviet interest in using UN peacekeeping for intelligence purposes may limit ability to sell these proposals.
Economic	Useful in encouraging divisions between the West and the Third World.	Ignores real Third World annoyance at the USSR for refusing to provide significant aid.
Environment	Low-risk vehicle for image building. Probably reflects sincere Soviet interest in improving the environment.	No serious vulnerabilities. Duplicates existing proposals.
Legal/humanitarian	Helps deflect criticism of Soviet's questions human rights record and those of their allies.	Ignores human rights of interest to the Third World. Proposals are likely to alienate the West.